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Teaching Naked: Part Two

In the last issue of *The Weekly Reader*, I began talking about a recent book that has become much-discussed in the teaching and learning world, *Teaching Naked: How Moving Technology Out of Your College Classroom Will Improve Student Learning*, by José Antonio Bowen (Jossey-Bass, 2012). Bowen's main point is indicated in his subtitle: we must use technology in our teaching, but technology is most useful for deep learning if it is used outside class, leaving the classroom for "naked teaching."

I found many good ideas in Bowen's chapter on "Technology for Assessment." I was especially struck by his first idea: multiple-choice tests *before* class. I long ago abandoned pop quizzes or daily quizzes to assess student reading: I felt they took up too much class time, that they often emphasized the trivial over the important, and that they became the focus of learning instead of the content. Bowen's

idea to give such a test before class makes me want to re-visit this time-honored testing. As he points out, a system like Blackboard makes implementation of such tests quick and convenient. I can see how a short test taken before students come to class could be a motivator for them to do the reading, an indicator of what they do and do not know, and, best of all, a way to free up class time for deeper learning.

Another idea new to me is "just-in-time teaching." The physics department at Indiana University-Purdue University developed this idea. Students are given as assignment that is due just before class. These assignments are not quizzes, but warm-up questions. Two hours before class, students must post their responses. I see much value in this idea too, although I worry about students' harried schedules. Bowen then moves on to ideas that are probably more familiar to most of us: writing,

rubrics, and peer feedback. Writing, of course, calls for deep and reflective thinking, and most of the writing we ask students to do already happens outside the classroom.

The central chapter in his book, literally and figurative, is "The Naked Classroom." I would recommend the reading of this one chapter if you do not have time to read the whole book. Bowen calls here for a complete rethinking of the way we use class time, focused on deep, engaged, experiential learning, and all *in class*. He begins by discussing "The Place of Lecture": first, he talks about the ways this most commonly-used teaching method is not nearly the most effective, then he gives practical advice on making them better when we do choose to use them. Lectures have a place, he says, but only when it is the best teaching method; it should certainly not be the default, especially in this digital age. As he states

“The naked classroom allows us the time to focus on creating significant learning experiences for our students. Delivering content in advance, motivating learning with multiple channels of communication, and constructing assignments that force students to prepare for class will change both your expectations and those of your students for what happens in class.”



Continued from page 1

elsewhere in the book, students come to class bored and with an encyclopedia in their pockets. If I lecture, it better be really good, since a student can readily find somebody on YouTube or at Khan Academy who is a more inspiring lecturer than I am.

Instead of lecture, Bowen advocates active learning for classroom engagement. The pedagogies for active learning he covers are class writing and discussion, role-playing, lab work, and collaborative, cooperative, and problem-based learning. He has an excellent section on leading discussions (and a quick time-out to say that we will have a TLC session on leading class discussion on Tuesday, March 26 at 11:00). We all know how effective a good class discussion can be, but success depends both on our being good leaders of discussion and on our students being prepared. Bowen's techniques for using technology outside the classroom can help take care of that last part.

He next moves on to discussing the classroom as lab or studio; those of us in the sciences and in the arts know how successful that kind of

learning environment can be. But how can those of us who teach English or math design our classrooms that way? Bowen gives practical advice for both disciplines: in math, students work on sets of problems at math easels, with the professor wandering the class giving advice or having students share solutions; in English, students work in groups to come up with better ways to retell a short story.

Bowen concludes this central chapter by emphasizing the necessity of making the classroom a stimulating learning environment. The naked classroom makes sure you can do that. Here is a key quotation: “The naked classroom allows us the time to focus on creating significant learning experiences for our students. Delivering content in advance, motivating learning with multiple channels of communication, and constructing assignments that force students to prepare for class will change both your expectations and those of your students for what happens in class. Presenting interactive lectures only when it truly serves your learning outcomes, using active learning techniques, structuring focused

discussions, and using technology as a deliberate tool when necessary can turn even the largest survey into an engaging studio environment” (213).

I think one reason this book resonates so much with me involves a paradox: I have already been teaching in many of the ways Bowen talks about, but I have not always linked these teaching methods to technology used outside the classroom. By concentrating on using technology in a more focused way *before* my students come to class, I am convinced that I can make my classrooms even more engaging and interesting, and more importantly, my students' learning will be fuller and deeper.

In his third section, “Strategies for Universities of the Future,” Bowen has three chapters that should be of special interest to department chairs, deans, and other administrators, as well as to other faculty and staff members. I recommend this book to anyone who wants to look at new ways of using technology, especially ways to move technology outside the class, to engage students more fully, and to free class time for deeper learning.

XXITE 2.0 ----- The Virtual Gathering Place for WU (The Reboot!)

Jo Koster and I invite you to join XXITE (Twenty-first Century Teaching Excellence)—or if you have already joined, to check it out again as it grows and develops. Maybe you have not been there in a long time—if not, you will see many changes in look and content. For example, XXITE now has groups dedicated to HMXP and CRTW, with

those of us who teach those courses sharing ideas and materials. Talk to Jo about setting up your own interest group. Jo is particularly interested in recruiting a few people to blog regularly about their teaching.

Jo set up this interactive site to give Winthrop faculty a virtual gathering space to share ideas about teaching and

technology. You'll find blogs and discussion forums on various topics—and we urge you to add your own ideas. Visit again at <http://wuxxite.ning.com/> Or email Jo Koster for an invitation to join: kosterj@winthrop.edu The TLC website also has links to navigate your way there or to join: <http://www2.winthrop.edu/tlc/>

A New Service From the TLC: Teaching Consultation

The Teaching and Learning Center is offering a new service: teaching consultation. At the instructor's request, I (or another agreed-upon person) will visit your class to observe and consult with you afterwards about your successes and challenges. This consultation has nothing to do with the tenure and

promotion process, and no reports will be made to department chairs or deans (unless you so request). The invitation to the consultant can only come from the instructor, not from a dean or chair or any other person. All conversations will be private and confidential. If you don't want me to visit your class and observe your teaching, we could

just meet and talk about your teaching. If I am not available to visit your class because of my schedule, I will find a qualified person to do the consulting. So please let me know if you would like to invite me into your class or for a consultation. Call or email me at (803) 323-3679 or birdj@winthrop.edu.

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and Open Educational Resources. Within each category, you will find a number of excellent and informative videos. The Office of Academic Affairs has provided us a one-year subscription to this service.

People often tell the TLC that they would like to go to sessions, but they don't have the time or they can't

at the times sessions are offered. With Go2Knowledge, you can attend sessions on demand, anywhere, 24/7. The TLC will also have frequent Go2Knowledge Groups, where we meet to discuss a presentation. Log in here: <http://www.go2knowledge.org/winthrop> See you there!

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BLOG POSTS

- NEW POSTS ON THE RENOVATIONS**
Posted by [Mark Y. Herring](#) on June 22, 2012 at 2:09pm
- CORE VALUES**
Posted by [Mark Y. Herring](#) on June 5, 2012 at 9:41am
- PLAYING TO TYPE**
Posted by [Blaiz C. Harding](#) on May 25, 2012 at 10:22am
- TEACHING CRITICAL THINKING IN THE CLASSROOM**
Posted by [Amanda Hiler](#) on March 19, 2012 at 12:11pm — [LUC](#)
- WINE WITH THE WIND...**
Posted by [Jo Koster](#) on March 6, 2012 at 10:33am — [2 Comments](#)

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NOTES

- DO COLLEGE PROFESSORS WORK HARD ENOUGH?**
Created by [Jo Koster](#) Mar 25, 2012 at 1:34pm. Last updated by [Jo Koster](#)
- WHO OWNS YOUR COURSE?**
Created by [Jo Koster](#) Mar 19, 2012 at 12:07pm. Last updated by [Jo Koster](#)
- STUDENT OWNERSHIP OF TABLETS INCREASES, PREFERENCE FOR GROWING**
Created by [Jo Koster](#) Mar 14, 2012 at 11:24am. Last updated by [Jo Koster](#)

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Thought for The Week

"Adam and Eve had many advantages, but the principle one was that they escaped teething.."
--Mark Twain